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Joe Courtney
Congress of the United States
2nd District, Connecticut

February 25, 2010

Honorable Andrew Maynard, Chairman
Select Committee On Veterans' Affairs
Room 509A, Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Honorable Ted Graziani, Chairman
Select Committee On Veterans' Affairs
Room 509A, Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony of Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2) in support of Raised Bill 5265, An Act Concerning the Expiration of Driver's Licenses Issued to Members of the Armed Forces.

Dear Chairman Maynard and Chairman Graziani,

I would like to thank Chairman Graziani and Chairman Maynard for holding this hearing today.

As the member of the U. S. House of Representatives who represents Connecticut's Second Congressional District, I am pleased to submit testimony in support of Raised Bill 5265, An Act Concerning the Expiration of Driver's Licenses Issued to Members of the Armed Forces. I would like to thank the Committee for taking up this important initiative. I would also like to particularly thank Representative Mae Flexer, who has been a stalwart supporter of our state's Armed Forces and our veteran's population and is responsible for helping to bring this legislation forward.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have had the privilege of visiting with the men and women of the U. S. military serving in both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. These men and women have sacrificed a great deal on behalf of their country and on behalf of you and me.

During one of my recent visits to Iraq in July 2009, I met with Army Sergeant First Class John Bellville of Killingly and had the opportunity to discuss several issues with him. Staff Sergeant Bellville shared with me his concerns with Connecticut's law regarding driver's license renewals and the fact that members of the military deployed overseas were being penalized for having their driver's licenses expire. In particular, he shared that often a service member's license would expire while they were deployed – leaving them at risk of being pulled over, paying a penalty for late renewal or other complications they might encounter when they return home. After returning home, I shared his concerns with Representative Flexer, and I am deeply appreciative of her attention to this matter in the months since.

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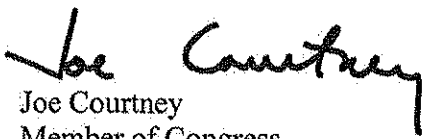
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With so much already on their mind, the men and women of our Armed Forces should not have to be worried about whether their state issued driver's license is about to expire or whether they might be fined while they are on the frontlines defending our freedom. As public officials, it is our duty to ensure that they are protected from unfair policies and that they have the support at home which they have earned.

This legislation would allow the licenses of those serving away from the state in active military service to remain valid 30 days after returning home, giving them the time they need to renew their license. This proposal is one simple, yet meaningful, way to ease the burden on our troops deployed to the front lines. As Representative Flexer has determined through her diligent research, a number of other states have modified their renewal laws to accommodate active duty service member. Connecticut should join those states by enacting Raised Bill 5265.

Again, I thank the committee and Representative Flexer for taking action on this issue, and I urge your strong support for Raised Bill 5265. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other important issues facing our state and nation.

Sincerely,


Joe Courtney
Member of Congress